

Hermon School Committee
Minutes – Regular Meeting
Monday, July 6, 2020 – 6:30 p.m.
Hermon High School, Room 167

Online meeting: <https://meet.google.com/edb-ctfb-yfr>
Providing Leadership to Enhance the Aspirations of our Children

Present

Ted Harris, Chair
Debora Farnham, Vice Chair
Deborah Langille
Debbie CoWallis

Attending Virtually

Scott Hatch

Absent

Jesse Keith

Staff: Cindy Badger, Jim Chasse, Gary Gonyar, Micah Grant, Jesse Hargrove, Jenny Perry, Jamie Rennebu, Brian Walsh and Jody White

Guests: Ashley Stowe

Item I: Mr. Harris, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:41 p.m. due to technical difficulties

Item II: Election of Officers

Mrs. Farnham moved, seconded by Mrs. CoWallis, to nominate Mr. Harris for Chair.
Unanimous (5)

Ms. Langille moved, seconded by Mr. Harris, to nominate Mrs. Farnham as Vice Chair.
Unanimous (5)

Item III: Agenda Adjustments: Mr. Chasse will be bringing one less candidate forward for employment.

Item IV: Approval of Minutes

Ms. Langille motioned, seconded by Mrs. Farnham, to approve the regular meeting minutes of June 1, 2020, presented.
Unanimous (5)

Item IV: Proclamations and Presentation

A. Public Comments: None

B. Donations

Superintendent Chasse announced the donation of \$150 to the Hermon High School Hawks for Change Pantry from Hermon Family Dental.

He also gave a heads up that Carmel Well Drilling offered to donate a well specifically to water the fields, not to impact the school well at all.

Item V: Personnel

A. Resignations

Superintendent Chasse announced the resignations of:

- Amy McClare, HHS Guidance Secretary/Registrar

B. Employment

Mrs. Perry presented the candidates for the Patricia A. Duran School.

Ms. Langille motioned, seconded by Mrs. Farnham to approve the employment of:

- Laura Landry, Grade 2 Teacher
- Ashley Stowe, Grade 2 Teacher

Unanimous (4)

Mr. Grant presented the candidate for Hermon Middle School.

Ms. Langille motioned, seconded by Mrs. Farnham to approve the employment of:

- Seth Ordway, Grade 2 Teacher
Unanimous (4)

Item VI: Old Business

A. Excused Absence of School Committee Member/s:

Mr. Harris motioned, seconded by Ms. Langille to excuse the absence of Mr. Keith.
Unanimous (5)

B. Timecard Options

Jamie Rennebu, Business Manager, stated that we are still waiting on a piece of information from Executime, the same company as Infinite Visions.

Item VII: New Business

A. Approval to Apply for Federal Funds

Superintendent Chasse explained that there must be school committee approval to apply for federal funds.

Ms. Langille motioned, seconded by Mrs. Farnham, to approve the superintendent to apply for federal funds.

Unanimous (5)

B. HSC Meeting Schedule 2020-21

Ms. Langille motioned, seconded by Mrs. CoWallis, to approval the Hermon School Committee meeting schedule for 2020-21, as presented.

Unanimous (5)

C. Appointment of a Reopening School Committee Member

Mr. Harris motioned, seconded by Ms. Langille, to appoint Mrs. Farnham as the Reopening School Committee Member.

Unanimous (5)

D. First Reading of Job Description

a. Student Information System Data Manager Technology Specialist

Ms. Langille motioned, seconded by Mrs. Farnham to approve the first reading of the Student Information System Data Manager Technology Specialist Job Description, as presented.

Unanimous (5)

Item VIII: Reports

A. Superintendent

Superintendent Chasse thanked everyone for the warm welcome. He had a transition plan with Mr. Gonyar and he spent several days in district prior to his official start. He met with each principal/leadership team, and central office business manager which was helpful. He attended an A-Team meeting which discussed what was great about the year and what was difficult. He has met with the nurses in regards to COVID mentioned that we had not opted to go with MPA's 1st plan. He met with Mr. Gonyar and Mr. Harris a couple of times to help set the agenda. He has met with the town manager, and he'll do that again in the future. He has met with the Penquis and Kennebec Superintendent Associations via Zoom. He's conducted three employee interviews. He has made initial contact with the HEA President.

In regards to the reopening planning, it can be frustrating. He agrees Mr. Gonyar was right to have a little bit of a respite and wait until August. The decision was made not to go with

the MPA July opening of sports work out sessions for the high schools. The MPA has their 2nd plan for August. They are watching the weekly updates, upticks, counts, re-openings in other states, what MDOE puts out for re-opening framework, what the CDC has to say, what the MEA has to say, and what Drummond & Woodsum has to say. The plan for now is to assemble a team quickly, have a game plan with general framework with a larger group to reopen schools and then having smaller breakouts that would be grade level specific. One of the first things the group will do is take the pulse of the community with an employee-based survey and a parent survey. We are going to look at: what's possible, what is practical, is it affordable, what about transportation, how different does it look than anything we've done before in education, how do we help families out, what went well with distance learning, what didn't, how can accountability go up if forced in to remote learning again, interventions for families. The Penquis Region would like to stay together on this.

B. Principals

Mr. Walsh stated that his leadership team met last Wednesday. The two big items were re-opening and remote learning. They have started a framework for what the high school plans may look like. They will work under the guidelines of the district committee, but they felt they could not wait until August 1st to have several options in place, and they can fine tune those once the district committee comes up with their guidelines. Parents are looking for answers for the fall.

Mr. Grant stated that he cannot wait for the fall, we need to have kids back. His leadership team meets in two weeks. He will have conversations with Mr. Chasse about what we can do to keep kids as safe as possible.

Mrs. Perry during their in-service, they debriefed about the closure, the impact this year's remote learning had on their curriculum and instruction. They planned for the start of the school year to make sure they would hit all standards at the beginning that they may have not instructed in the same way they would have in the classroom. They have a remote plan, and an in-school plan for each grade level. They will wait to see what the committee puts in place. At this time, they have received their Pre-K waiver for up to 18 instead of 16 in each of their classrooms. They do have a full load. They have had 3 families withdraw due to COVID, and she does anticipate more within the next month. She has not been able to designate a.m. or p.m. (based upon which half of town) placement due to bussing. They've been receiving many phone calls from parents about their childcare changing due to either shut downs or no longer providing. These changes then change their address for transportation purposes. There is a waiting list of 5 year olds.

C. Finance Report

Jamie Rennebu reported that we were right about 5% below the budgeted revenues. She is anticipating some funds that have not come in yet. We are within about 5% of the budgeted expenditures were, as well. We are going to transfer some of the 5% of the special ed, approved at the last meeting, to the buildings and grounds line. She is working with the town to get some of the reserve's figures ironed out. The audit is well under way for the interim work. We are waiting for the warrant article vote to finalize the budget in Profund. The implementation of the new financial system is not until January 1st. Superintendent Chasse will implement a monthly one-page report of where the cost centers are at by percentage.

D. School Committee Follow-up and Request for Information

Mrs. CoWallis stated with the pandemic stuff going on she did not feel that she had been as effective board member as she'd been over the years. Moving forward, she feels she's in a better position to be the board member she's been for all these years. She wished

Superintendent Chasse success and thought maintaining the good relationship we've had between the districts will be an advantage to all of us.

Ms. Langille also welcomed Superintendent Chasse and understood the circumstance Mrs. CoWallis mentioned.

Mrs. Farnham reiterated Ms. Langille's sentiments. She read the reports of the principals and looked at the numbers of kids who fell off. She understands the struggle trying to keep them engaged. That has to be part of the big focus. Hopefully we will be able to start the new year on a better foot and handle it better if we have to go back to where we are.

Mr. Hatch asked the principals if there had been concerns from staff about returning to work in the fall and what was their personal opinion as to what is in the best interests of students returning in the fall. Mr. Walsh did not feel he should discuss personnel and their health concerns. He stated his personal opinion did not matter, he is going to plan as if school is going to happen in person, and he hopes that occurs. Mr. Grant agreed with the American Pediatric Association that kids need to be physically present in school. Mrs. Perry stated that she felt it would be hardest and most important to plan for the littles. It's harder for parents when they are little. It's also important to make sure it's the safest because they have the highest risk. We have to do what is right for them safety-wise, educationally and emotionally. Mr. Harris stated that he would like to be authorized by the State, the CDC and science and be on the same page, but also he does not want to have the death of any child.

Mr. Harris received a thank you letter for continuing to pay our staff through the fiscal year. We got the new bus in from the Volkswagen grant. He asked about cameras on buses. Superintendent Chasse stated all the buses would have cameras once the new one arrives. He asked if we were looking at speakers on racism and our policy and procedures for staff in regards to how racism is reported. He also inquired about the status of solar.

Superintendent Chasse thought that the policies would be a great thing to look at in an A-Team meeting. He provided the policies in his report informationally for now. We will start to look at them one by one. Mrs. Badger stated that she attended a Title IV training with Drummond & Woodsum. They are looking at updating the policies. She has already reached out to Maine School Management to get the updated policy language.

E. Other:

Item IX: Approval of warrant(s)

Mr. Harris motioned, seconded by Mrs. Farnham to approve Warrant 25 of June 12th and Warrant 26 of June 26, 2020.

Unanimous (4)

Item X: Adjournment

Mr. Harris adjourned the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

Accepted unless doubted.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Chasse
Superintendent of Schools